Pension for Ex-Servicemen with less than 15 years of service

133. PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of ex-servicemen in the country with less than 15 years of service;

(b) whether they have represented for a minimum pension, in view of the fact that many of them are starving;

(c) whether Government will reconsider its earlier stand that no pension will be granted to them;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI M.M. PALLAM RAJU): (a) Information on the total number of ex-servicemen in the country with less than 15 years of service is not available separately. However, as per the census carried out by the Office of Directorate General of Resettlement the registered population of ex-servicemen was 20,58,743 as on 31.3.2007.

(b) Representations have been received from personnel who did not render qualifying service requesting for grant of pension to them.

(c) No change in Government police is contemplated at present.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) A prescribed minimum qualifying service is the cardinal principle to earn pension. As per the existing policy, 15 years & 20 years of qualifying service has to be rendered by Personnel Below Officer Rank (PBOR) and Commissioned Officers respectively in order to be eligible for pensionary benefits. No change in the existing policy is contemplated by the Government.

Delay in sale of warship by Russia

134. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Russia has delayed the sale of Warship to India recently;

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that Russia has increased the sale price of the ship to nearly double the actual cost fixed;

(c) if so, whether there is any proposal under the active consideration of the Government to contact some other country in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons for depending on Russia only in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) The overall progress of repair and re-equipping of the ship, ex-Admiral Gorshkov, in Russia is behind schedule. Execution of contract for construction of three ships of Project 1135.6 (follow-on-ships of Talwar Class) is on schedule.

(b) Russia has indicated an increase in price for repair and re-equipping of ex-Admiral Gorshov.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) The need for contacting other country does not arise as the existing contract with Russia is still valid.

Reforms in Defence Forces

†135. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware about the unnecessary delay in most urgent reforms in the defence forces *viz.* change in size of all the three wings of defence forces, better training and equipment, adequate pay scales and facilities to the officers and other defence personnel etc.;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) by when Government will achieve the objective of organizational reforms and modernization etc. in the structure of defence forces in order to meet long term defence challenges?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (c) There is no unnecessary delay in reforms relating to defence forces. Organizational reforms and modernization of defence forces are continuing processes depending upon the specific requirements and operational necessity.

Resignations by Pilots of Air Force

136. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of pilots of Air Force have resigned or left the service recently;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken to ensure that they do not leave the service?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) There has been no instance of large number of pilots of the Indian Air Force (IAF) leaving the service.

The pilots of the IAF are granted premature retirement/resignation on case to case basis in accordance with extant Government policy.

(c) The improvement in the job profile of the pilots is a continuous process keeping in view the job specific requirements and operational necessity.

Air journeys by former PMs and Ministers in IAF planes

†137. SHRI JAI PARKASH AGGARWAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether ex-Prime Ministers and other ex-Union Ministers have travelled by the planes of Indian Air Force between the period of 1st January, 2000 to 30th June, 2004;

(b) if so, the year-wise details of the air-travel trips made by them separately;

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi